



**BANGLADESH**

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Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali**  
**the Hon'ble Chairman, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Member of Parliament of the People's**  
**Republic of Bangladesh**

at the Open Debate on "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" at the Security Council

New York, November 09, 2011

Mr. President,

I congratulate your country on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of November 2011. I specially thank you, the Hon'ble President of Portugal for presiding over this important meeting. I also express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General Ban ki-moon, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Catherine Bragg, and Director for International Law and Cooperation at the ICRC Philip Spoerri, for their excellent presentation on this topic.

Mr. President,

Protection for civilians is a basic principle of humanitarian law. The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols contain specific rules to protect civilians. In situations that are not covered by these treaties, in particular internal disturbances, civilians are protected by the fundamental principles of humanitarian law and human rights law.

Peacekeeping operations are one of the most important tools available to the UN to protect civilians in armed conflict. The Security Council's resolution 1894 (2009), as well as resolutions relating to children and armed conflict and to women and peace and security, the mandating of peacekeeping missions to protect civilians, the adoption of the aide-memoire on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2009/1) and the creation of the informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians have been important steps forward. However, more needs to be done for implementation of peacekeeping mandates and fulfillment of protection gaps.

Mr. President,

A total of five of the current seven UN peacekeeping operations (Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Sudan, Sudan-Darfur) with a protection mandate had developed comprehensive strategies on the protection of civilians: MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNMIS, UNOCI and UNIFIL. But challenges in the field continued in spite of these positive developments. UNAMID and MONUSCO have continued to experience difficulties in implementing their protection mandates last year. It needs to be seen whether the new policy documents developed in New York have a tangible impact on how peacekeeping operations are conducted at the field level. In this regard, the establishment of the new UN mission in South Sudan which includes a protection of civilians' mandate, will be an important test case for UN peacekeeping. We feel that the "adequate capacity" would be the most important element for effective protection of civilians.

Mr. President,

Since the Council held its last debate in May this year on this topic, we observed two noticeable initiatives by the Council. *First*, the Council resolution 1998 adopted in July

expanded the listing criteria in the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict to include parties to conflict that attack or threaten schools and hospitals. *Second*, the Council, during its annual debate on women, peace and security last month, adopted a presidential statement focusing on women's participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution in which it reiterated its condemnation of all violations of applicable international law committed against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Commending these developments, may I add here that the presence of uniformed female personnel may also play a pivotal role in a State's ability to protect its citizens. Here I take this opportunity to refer to the efforts of the all-female *Formed Bangladesh Police Unit* working in peace keeping mission in Haiti.

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to highlight a few issues to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflict. *The first* relates to prevention and the building of a culture of peace. Prevention is at the heart of protection. The preventive capacity of the Organization must be enhanced. At the same time, Member States need to take steps to inculcate the values of peace, tolerance and harmony that contribute to long-term prevention. *Second*, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations should be enhanced. Bangladesh, being one of the largest troop-contributing countries, my delegation feels that the main challenge for the implementation of protection mandates is the lack of adequate resources. We also believe that there needs to be a closer dialogue between the Council and troop-contributing countries as they can provide valuable information about the situation on the ground. *Fourth*, compliance with international legal obligations by parties to conflict need to be enhanced and accountability mechanisms should be strengthened. *Fifth*, international efforts including the use of force should be the last resort, while respecting the relevant provisions of the UN Charter, since the host country has the primary responsibility of protecting its civilians.

Mr. President,

Finally, my delegation urges all parties to conflicts to comply strictly with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, to ensure protection of the lives and property of civilians and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid. We call on the parties to conflicts to strengthen the protection of civilians through heightened awareness at all levels, particularly through the training, orders and instructions issued to armed forces.

I thank you, Mr. President.